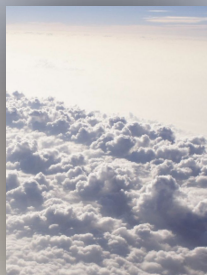




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# On Cloud 3



dystopia

poverty

government

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## Chapter 1 by N8

I suppose I was always considered a low class citizen. I'd spend my nights on the top of my shingled roof staring up at the higher levels. One in specific, Cloud 9. Where the celebrities lived, and the high-class politicians. Where money was no obstacle, and luxury was free. I suppose I should be thankful for what I have, because I was born on cloud 3 and not on cloud 1, the lowest of the low. The pest ridden streets, illness lingering in the air. My streets weren't much better, but I was healthy. I had shelter, but I was alone.

## Chapter 2 by N8



"Three dead, one injured," They said. A father, a mother, a sister and a brother. My father shot in his left eye. Instant death. My mother in the stomach. She bled out, had the worst of it all. My sister shot through the back of her head. She tried to escape. She was close, but not close enough, still in the gun's range. The law enforcement was on the scene by the time he shot me in the arm. Didn't get the chance to kill me. Out of all of my family, I was the one who lived. I should've died.

Chapter 3 by SaintEvoko



The news apparently reached the... See more of Story Wars... had oh so generously scrambled to donate money... it was any better to live here than on Cloud One... differences in crime rate.

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As nice as it was to finally have a bit of cash pumped into the cloud, it was also a little annoying. They were practically Gods, and all they could afford to give us were some new streets?

I mentioned all of this and more on my podium, where a crowd was beginning to draw from the power of my words. I hadn't expected such an expectant audience. Perhaps I wasn't the only one who had felt this way. A few had even begun to shout "Revolution!" - a pair of twins in matching red hats.

For the first time in forever, I had felt like something more than a charity case. I was no longer alone. I was powerful.

I could change our world.

#### Chapter 4 by Harlander



As our movement grew, people were forced to choose a side. Not only here on Cloud 3, where the revolution drew most of the people in, but above and below as well.

We knew some of the upper cloud dwellers sympathised with our demands for a fairer share, even as high as Cloud 9. Those who had sent money in my hour of tragedy spoke quietly of the righteousness of our cause. Perhaps they felt, finally, some guilt at how they lived off the sweat of our labours. I knew, though, that their kind hearts would wither at the first sign of violence, or even disorder, among our cadre.

More surprising were the downclouders, even those poor debased Cloud 1 dwellers, who sided with the status quo. They claimed that they didn't want to "punish success", as if they were only temporarily trapped in the lowest stratum and would soon take up their share of the riches of the high clouds.

Some called them traitors, but that was harsh. They were deluded, fooled into thinking they could ever advance in this harshly stratified world. I hoped that somehow we could make them see the light, but I feared that we'd come to blows with them before the upheaval we planned

was in order.

See more of Story Wars

Things came to a head when we marched out into the

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Chapter 5 by Intelikat



The ladders fell heavily against the edge of Cloud 5 as the many voices began to rise as one. If another were to see this from a distance, it would look like a parade of tiny ants scaling the heavens in the fading light of day.

None of the citizens of Cloud 5 heard us coming. Or when they did, it was too late. Neither did the inhabitants of Cloud 6, whose fate was similar though met about twenty minutes later. By the time that Cloud 7 had been breached, a call woke the Chancellor of 9.

His body was old and frail, but his mind yet sharp. He fitted his swollen feet into the soft slippers at bedside and lifted the porcelain receiver to his ear.

"Hello?"

"Chancellor. We have a problem from below."

"Which Cloud?"

"Three, sir."

The Chancellor stifled a cough. "Ungrateful cows. I knew we shouldn't have donated to their... level. Are the countermeasures in place?"

"Yes, Chancellor. Growler Units are in place on the edge."

"Fine. If any of the lower Clouds manage to handle this situation themselves, be sure to get the names of those involved. If not, let's be sure that things end as swiftly as they did in the days of Chancellor Elden. Please let me know as things progress. I won't be sleeping now."

There was confirmation on the other end, and the Chancellor replaced the receiver in its jewelled cradle.

The phone had been a gift, in fact, on his eighteenth year in service of the Cloud, and it reminded him of his journey from childhood on Cloud 7 up to his position as a young man on

Cloud 8, and finally his election to Cloud 9 and progressively and eventual journey to Chancellor. There were those below... like the... assigned that to be born on Cloud 9 somehow meant it was a... that true at all. His own grandson, in fact, had been judged... and now resided on Cloud 5.

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On Cloud 5.

For a moment, the Chancellor wondered where the insurrection might be. He had forgotten to ask. Oh well, no matter. This was the way of the Cloud. It seemed that every many cycles there was such turmoil. Those leading the insurrection would be punished severely, as they always were. It would only serve to strengthen the Order of the Cloud.

The Chancellor sat down heavily in his soft bed and exhaled. But before another thought could pass though his mind, he heard a noise from the adjoining room.

### Chapter 6 by DoomishFox



The window was open. With a groan the Chancellor remembered leaving it open. Heaving himself to his feet, the man slowly staggered through to the other room.

The room was on the 6th floor, one higher than the rest of Cloud 9. This provided a breathtaking view of the city. Its primary color was white; its primary building material was glass. Beyond the lip was simply clouds, no fortified walls or fences. After all, this was Cloud 9, who would want to leave? The sun was just beginning to timidly show itself through the clouds, casting a soft warm light over the graceful buildings.

Yet now it was different. There was noise. The Chancellor peered down into the streets below. People running, no, fleeing. Others, from the lower clouds, running with them. This was a disaster.

They were all running in the same direction, toward the same thing. Or were they running away from the same thing. Hurriedly the Chancellor shuffled his slippers feet back to the other room. The phone rang.

### Chapter 7 by Harriet Jones, MP, Flydale North



"Chancellor." The voice which had held such calm before now spoke with an obvious tinge of panic. "They've breached the city."

"I can see that," the Chancellor snapped, although with his age and failing health, the snap was just a slightly raised voice. "Have you alerted the Cloud 9 units?"

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"Yes sir"

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The Chancellor again peered out the window and saw that the crowd of people that had once rushed past his palace had disappeared. Various dropped belongings littered the streets, but otherwise the roads were occupied only by the human-dog hybrids searching for rebels. He noticed a few of them were dragging people away--lower-Cloud residents from the looks of it--and he smiled. *This rebellion didn't amount to much, did it?* he thought.

"I'd wipe that smile off my face if I were you," an angry voice growled from behind the Chancellor.

This startled the Chancellor so much that--as he whirled around to face the intruder--he let out a great cry, stumbled to the ground, and dropped the phone onto the marble floor. He heard the crack of ceramic and the voice on the other end frantically shouting, "Chancellor?? Chancellor!!"

The Chancellor raised a hand over his face and trembled as he asked, "Who--who are you?"

The man stepped closer, holding a small gun. Except . . . he wasn't a man. He was a boy.

"I am Tirath from Cloud 3, the boy whose family was killed and whose misfortune prompted donations from your lofty cloud, *sir*," he spat out in reply.

The Chancellor's face grew hard. "So *you're* the one we have to thank for all of this mess."

"I think you mean, 'I'm the one you have to thank for waking up the masses to this unjust and unequal system.'"

"My boy, there is much you don't know about how this system works. You only know what you *want* to know. Have you not heard of the misfortune of my nephew, Bane Hearthjoy?"

The boy froze. "What name did you just say?"

"Bane Hearthjoy. He was my nephew. So you have heard of him."

The gun began to lower. "I . . . I do know him . . . I mean . . . I did know him."

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"He's . . . he's dead . . . he was my father"

the end

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